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I DO

OR
THE
GOOD
CONFESSION

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ual of Confirmation

BY THE

ED KENNION. M

I DO;
OR,
THE GOOD CONFESSION.

A Manual of Confirmation.

BY THE
REV. ALFRED KENNION, M.A.,

VICAR OF GERRARD'S CROSS, BUCKS.

Author of "Sermons on the Lord's Supper," etc.



London :
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,
12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1884.

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I.

Fatih's Confession.

ERRATUM.

ge 10, line 1. *For* "Some of the passage will be impossible," *read* "Soon the passage will be impossible."

I.

Faith's Confession.

'And a certain scribe came, and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead."—MATTHEW viii. 19—22.

NEVER begin the preparation of Candidates for Confirmation without feelings of great hopefulness, for I think I have never failed to see some signal blessing resulting from it.

On the other hand, I cannot but regard *this work* with feelings of great solemnity,

I DO.

,—careful not to quench the

on is appointed, not by Christ
by the Church. It thus differs
raments (baptism and the Lord's
while, like them, it has an outward
sign, that sign was not "ordained
Himself," "The Church hath
decree Rites or Ceremonies. . . .
is not lawful for the Church to
/thing that is contrary to God's
tten." But Confirmation, as it
has in it nothing contrary to
rd, is also certainly one of the
urch institutions; and though
different from the laying on of the
he Apostles (for the Apostles only,
of their contemporaries or successors,
vey the power of working miracles,
e laying on of hands), yet it grew out
and is, as the Confirmation Service
"after the example of the holy
;" and we may expect Christ richly
the true and right use of this ordi-
rch.
e and right use," for Confirm
of two parts: the one bei

that united prayer for the Holy Spirit, of which I have spoken, the other the public confession of Christ on the part of those to be Confirmed. And only to those who do really in their heart thus confess Christ, can any blessing be expected to come.

This confession of Christ is contained in those two briefest of words, "I DO." I shall make it my business in this little book to examine in detail the meaning of these words, that you may fully understand them. For the Church admits to Confirmation only those who have come to such "years of discretion," so that they may understand what they are doing. We discourage an ignorant, even if sincere, person coming to Confirmation, just as Christ Himself lovingly discouraged the young scribe in the text. For it would be impossible more aptly to explain the brief words, *I do*, than by the words of that young man—"Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Fair and blessed words! but Christ replied, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head:" that is, "Have you really thought what it means to follow Me? It does not, in

this world, bring honour, wealth, pleasure, ease, security. Rather it unveils the truth that this world is not a home and not a resting-place. My followers are strangers here and pilgrims. There was no room for Me, even in the inn at Bethlehem. At Nazareth and Gadara they would none of Me. Soon they will cry, 'Away with Him.' Can you follow Me now you know this?" So Christ spake; and in like manner the Church would do her best to secure that *you understand what you say*. She seeks not to multiply empty professors, or to fill her field with tares.

But, alas, how few are too forward! Therefore, side by side with that young man, we see another who wished to postpone Christ's service—"My father is aged: while he lives he rightly claims my care: when I have performed the last rites for him, *then* I will follow Thee." How many put off surrendering themselves to Christ, and make a far less plausible excuse! To such Christ says (and there is a holy irony in His words), "Let the dead bury their dead. Follow Me: follow Me now. You may yourself be dead to-morrow, and how shall the dead bury their *dead*?"

O let none put off, none neglect this great opportunity ! There are ten thousand reasons why you should seize it, and seize it eagerly. The earlier you choose Christ, the earlier you will begin to sip the cup of true happiness, and the sweeter that cup will be all through life, and all along the ages of eternity. Here, in this world, fewer regrets, fewer fears, fewer entanglements, fewer difficulties. And, over yonder, a larger store of mercies to enjoy, and more varied songs of thanksgiving. Less hurt done to others, and more good. More battles won, and therefore more decorations to be worn. More of heaven here, and therefore more capacity to enjoy heaven by and by. More sowing, and therefore more reaping. Every year and week and day of real Christian life will score some blessing to be multiplied by infinite years. Other opportunities *may* come (not *will* come); but, as with the fabled books in Roman history, you would have to pay the same price for far fewer blessings. You are like one who has come to the bank of a stream which must needs be crossed, if home is to be reached. The waters are rising,—rising rapidly. Every

I DO.

to the difficulty. ^{Soon} ~~Some of~~ the
be impossible. "*Now is the*

O "embrace *now*, and ever
blessed hope of everlasting life,
as given us in His Son, Jesus

COLLECT.

God, whom truly to know is
: grant me perfectly to know
us Christ to be the way, the
: life; that, following the steps
unts, I may steadfastly walk in
eadeth to eternal life: through
ur Lord. Amen.

I D O.

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II.

Faith's Abiding Object.



I D O.

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II.

Faith's Abiding Object.

follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." I want to persuade you to take up and use these words deliberately, intelligently, lovingly, resolutely.

It is necessary first to know WHOM you are thus invited to follow. The answer to this is our subject in this chapter. But oh! how shall I attempt to describe Him, or to display a thousandth part of the reasons which should constrain you to follow Him?

This is He to whom all good men for the first 2,000 years of this world's history looked forward as THE MAN among men, who, at some vast personal suffering and sacrifice, should destroy the works of the devil. That was all they clearly knew about Him.

During the next three centuries there rose up three men in succession,—father, son, and grandson,—to each of whom God gave a promise that the expected MAN should be in their family. And around this new promise, as the centuries rolled on, there gathered the further revelation that He would be a great prophet, taken, like Moses, from among the people; and Priests and Captains, and Strong Deliverers, like Aaron, Joshua, Samson, served as faint shadows of Him that was to come.

Gen. iii. 15.

Gen. xxii. 18
Gen. xxvi. 4.
Gen. xxviii.
14.

Deut. xviii.
18.

Thus the third thousand years passed, and then came another step onward. It was announced, that the expected One was to be of the seed of David, yet David's Lord: He was to be the Son of Man, yet the Son of God: He was to be born at Bethlehem, yet "His goings forth" were to have been "from everlasting:" He was to be born of a Virgin, yet His name was to be "Emmanuel:" He was to be a King, and to secure a world-wide dominion adorned with righteousness and peace, yet He was to win this by suffering; for He was to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and, by this means, to "divide the spoil with the strong."

¹ Chron.
xvii. 11-14.
Ps. cx 1.
Dan. vii. 13.
Ps. ii. 7.

Micah v. 2.

Is. vii. 14.

Ps lxxii.

Is. liii. 7, 12.

These new lines of information, with many others, were laid down during the 600 years after David's reign began. Then followed a long dreary silence of 400 years. Then, at length, one winter's night, the Heavens burst out with Light and Song, for *the long-promised Saviour was come*, born a babe at Bethlehem.

Luke ii.

The Saviour so born was by Divine Command named JESUS. And the four Gospels are the description God has given us of His Words of Light and Works of Power. And yet, strange to say, the one thing on which

Luke ii. 21

y are all fullest and most explicit is His
FATH.

This Death was the most wonderful and
e greatest event that ever happened, or
er will happen. For it is the greatest,
ost awful, most affecting proof and display
the Holiness and Love of God. Christ's
ath sets forth the *holiness* of God in this
y. If pardon could have been had
thout anything to balance it, without any-
ing to mark the dreadfulness of sin, God's
horrence of it, and the awful results of
remaining unforgiven, sin would have seemed
a slight matter, and the holiness of God, the
spotless whiteness of His throne, would have
een tarnished. But Christ's death clears
e name of God from such a stain, and
akes it evident that sin is the abominable
ning that God hateth. At the same time,
hat God should so love us as to be willing
o pardon us at the cost of giving up His
on to such a death, tells us how wondrous
at love is, and proves it to us as nothing
se could have proved it, without that gift.
He was born that He might die. In that death
He bore our sins. He completed by His last
and highest act a life of perfect obedience :

He opened the door of everlasting life to all them that believe in Him. His resurrection set God's seal on the unspeakable importance and value of His Death. Then "when He had by Himself purged our sins," He ascended, and "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." From thence He will return to judge the world. And ever since He went, the Grand Message to man has been, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Now, one part of the question asked in Confirmation is, "Do you believe in Jesus?" The reply of those Confirmed is, "*I do.*" "*I do believe in God the Son who redeemed me and all mankind.*" "*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,—and who, chiefest of all things—Suffered—was crucified, dead, and buried.*" "I believe in Jesus, who is my Ascended Priest, through whom I may always go boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 14—16), and who ever liveth to make intercession for me. (Heb. vii. 25.) I believe in Him as my King, who rules all things for His Church, and who will come

n to judge the world. I come to Him,
I give myself to Him to be my Saviour
I my King."

I put this in the fore-front, because that is
proper place. The Bible ever puts first
; faith in Jesus Christ. And in the
catechism, the Creed (or short account of our
belief), stands in the centre, between the
renunciation" and the Commandments, for
the same reason. For no otherwise can we
nounce, or obey, than in proportion as we
lieve; and the most prominent portion of
the Creed is the Belief in Jesus Christ, of
whom I have spoken.

But *I* cannot draw one soul to Jesus Christ.
It is the Father who alone can do this. And
from Him I beseech you to crave so great a
blessing.

COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, grant me so
perfectly and without doubt to believe in Thy
Son Jesus Christ, that my faith in Thy sight
may never be reproved. Hear me through
the same Jesus Christ, to whom with Thee
and the Holy Ghost be all honour and
glory for evermore. Amen.

I D O.

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III.

Faith's Supreme Importance.

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III.

Faith's Supreme Importance.

“Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is THE WORK of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”—JOHN vi. 28, 29.

THE great theme of the Bible is that of which I have already spoken, that God sent forth His Son to be the Saviour of the world. In like manner God's Great Message to men now is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And, in strict accordance with this, the core and kernel of the Confirmation Question is, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” Of this, too, I have said somewhat, but you must let me take it up again now, for it is of supreme importance. St. John tells us that the very object of his writing his Gospel was *that men* “might believe that Jesus Christ is *John xx. 31*.”

he Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, they might have life through His 'ame." I should like you to read through his Gospel, and to underline with pen or pencil the words "believe," "belief," and the like, for you will see very clearly by this how full the Gospel is of this great matter.

A few of the leading texts I want you specially to consider.

1. Belief in Him whom God sent is *the great work* enjoined on us. If this is lacking, all is lacking; but if this goes well, all goes well.

2. This Belief carries the soul across the boundary line from the state of Death into Life. He that believes in Christ "HATH EVERLASTING LIFE." See and learn by heart the thrice-repeated statement. "He that *believeth* on the Son *hath everlasting life*." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and *believeth* on Him that *sent Me, hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from (out of the region of) death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth on Me hath everlasting life*."

3. This Belief admits into fellowship with

God as our Father in Jesus Christ. Christ said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me:" and again, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." To manifest the Father's Name, and to glorify Him as the Father, is stated to be a primary object of the Saviour's work. Hence we are taught that to receive Jesus is the way to be made God's true Sons. Or, as St. Paul said, "Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus."

John xiv. 6,
9.

John i. 18.
John xvii 4.
6, 26.

John i. 12.
Galatians iii.
26.

4. Belief in Jesus opens the heart to the incoming and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, to sanctify, refresh, and comfort.

John vii. 38.
39.

Thus you see that faith in Jesus Christ is inseparable from faith in the Father, and in the Holy Ghost.

I want to say a little more about this belief in the Holy Ghost, in reference to the concluding paragraph of the Creed. Our belief in the "holy Catholic (*i.e.*, Universal) Church" is a belief that, in spite of all appearances, God has such a Church, and that the *Holy Spirit* is gradually sanctifying and perfecting it, and will one day manifest its glory. And the Christian ought humbly to believe that he by grace is

made a member of that Church, and will share its triumphs. So, too, you should believe that, *by the grace of the same Spirit*, all true saints in all ages and places, in heaven and in earth, have fellowship and *communion* "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and therefore with one another. And it is only *by the same Spirit* "convincing" us that we can comfortably believe *in the forgiveness* of our own sins, and in the glorious resurrection of our *own* bodies, and thus, in the assurance of "the life everlasting."

It accords with the supreme importance which Scripture attaches to Faith, that our Church insists so much upon it. This may be noted in six particulars.

(1) Our Church asks of those presented ^{of} for baptism, "Wilt thou be baptized *in this faith?*" In the early Church the Creed was the chief confession required at baptism, and in our own Church it occupies the largest part of the confession.

(2) Our Church does not admit infants to baptism without the same question—
"Wilt thou be baptized *in this faith?*"

(3) *In order that all concerned may be*

I DO.

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IV.

Faith Fighting and Victorious.



IV.

Faith Fighting and Victorious.

“Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren, that are in the world.”—1 PETER v. 9.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”—1 JOHN v. 4, 5.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—ROMANS viii. 13.

ON the authority of the Bible, and following the example of our Church as seen in the Prayer-Book, I have insisted that *Faith is the main matter of all*.

Some of the reasons which make it so will be seen as we turn our attention now to the Christian life.

1. Faith is the secret of all power against Satan.

Satan succeeds by lies. He has two faces. With one he flatters: with the other he roars. But whether he flatters or roars, *he lies*.

He *flatters* by slandering God and His ways, and by making sin appear full of advantages, and wholly or nearly without punishment.

—5 By this plan he succeeded with Eve. By
·3 this plan he tried to succeed with our Lord in the wilderness.

He *roars* when he tries to hide God's promises, and to persuade that God has forgotten us, or has cast us off, or is unable to protect us against our foes. Thus he partially succeeded with Job. Thus he tried to succeed with our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane.

13 As a flatterer and a serpent, he is the
author of all false doctrine. As a roaring
lion, he is the author of all persecution.

Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil, came as "THE WORD," as
6, "THE TRUTH," "THE LIGHT," and
12. "THE FAITHFUL WITNESS:" that is,
He came to bring us the most complete, and

most clear, and most gracious account of God's will and heart toward us.

In Christ therefore we have such a full, plain, convincing evidence of God's love, and of His holiness; of the truth of His promises and of His threatenings; that Satan's lies are exposed. And thus faith in Jesus arms us on all points against Satan. We "know the Truth and the Truth makes us free:" and truly to believe in Jesus not only necessarily implies that we are "to renounce the devil and all his works," but is the real means by which alone we can renounce him. Hence St. Peter says, "Whom resist, *steadfast in the Faith*," and again it is said, "They overcame him *by the blood of the Lamb*." John viii 32
—36.
1 Pet. v. 9.
Rev. xii. 11.

2. Faith is the secret of power against the world.

The Catechism speaks of "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world."

By the word "pomps" is meant the outward show and glitter. By "vanities" is meant the emptiness that underlies that deceptive appearance. The book of Ecclesiastes supplies the best explanation of both words, showing that sooner or later all the See especially
Ecc. i. 2, 3.
ii. 4—
v. 10
vi.

fair pomps of the world leave behind, first vanity, and then vexation of spirit.

How important it is that we should not at any time of our life be ensnared by the false promise of the world, and how sure at all times of our life we are to meet with its entanglements, may be seen by the loving urgency with which the loved and loving disciple says, I write, I write, I write:—
 n ii. 17 I write to you as forgiven children of the Father; I write to you by your knowledge of the Eternal Son; I write to you by your victories over Satan: I urge you by your true childlike knowledge of the Father; I urge you by your knowledge of the Eternal Son; I urge you by the strength, the indwelling word, the victories over Satan, which the Spirit has given you:—“*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*”

To such a renouncing of the world we pledge ourselves—but St. John tells us how alone we can accomplish it. “Whatsoever
 n v. 4, is born of God overcometh the world—Who
 ee. too
 xiii. 44 is he that overcometh the world but HE
 THAT BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Son
 of God?”

A striking instance of such a victory by faith is seen in Heb. xi. 24—26.

3. Faith is the secret of all power against the flesh.

By the flesh we are to understand our whole fallen and corrupt nature, but chiefly those attractions to evil, and those hindrances to good that come through *our body*. Thus, in renouncing the sinful lusts of the flesh, we chiefly (but not only) renounce sloth, uncleanness, drunkenness, we refuse to think or to spend much on food or dress; in a word, we refuse to let the body be master, and the soul its servant. But how can such a conflict be maintained? Only by faith. "If ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii. 5. Gal. v. 19—21. "Ye *are bought* with a price: *therefore* glorify God in your bodies." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "I beseech you therefore by *the mercies of God* that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Rom. xii. 1.

Now success is always pleasant. Victory always a matter for joy. And is it not, my young friends, a matter full of encouragement, that you are not called to defeat, but to victory—to conflict, certainly, with scars and falls, but to a conflict whose issue is

certain to every one that believeth? For you are to "fight manfully UNDER CHRIST'S BANNER against Sin, the World and the Devil." And those on His side *must* win.

COLLECT.

LORD, I beseech Thee, grant me grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

I DO.

V.

Faith and the Law Love.



2

V.

Faith and the Law of Love.

“If ye love Me, keep my commandments.”—JOHN
xiv. 15.

“FAITH worketh by love.” That is, first Gal. v. 6.
comes faith, then love, then works. (1) “We
have *believed* the love that God hath to us:” 1 John iv. 16.
(2) “We *love Him* because He first loved 1 John iv. 19.
us:” (3) if we love Him we shall “*keep* 1 John v. 3.
His commandments.” In like manner, the
utterance of the Ten Commandments on
Mount Sinai was prefaced by the reminder,
“I am THE LORD thy God, who brought
thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the Ex. xx. 2.
house of bondage.” This was the most
affecting, though not the only claim on their
obedience.

God’s commandments have two great
objects. As to *the past*, they show us our

sins, that we may sue for pardon and discover
 our need of the precious Blood of Christ—
 even as we pray, "*Lord, have mercy upon us.*"
 As to *the future*, they set before us true
 human life as it ought to be, and lead us to
 ask for help—" *Incline our hearts to keep this
 law.*"

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 ice.

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 ice.

The account of true human life thus given
 us tells us of two things: (1) what is due (our
 duty) from us to God, and (2) what is due
 from us (our duty) to those around. To-day
 we take up two commands.

The FIRST Commandment suggests three
 great matters for self-examination and prayer.

1. When I speak of God, or call up to
 my mind the thoughts of Him, is the God
 of whom I so speak or think *the God described
 in the Bible*, or some dim, or defective, or
 distorted notion of Him, which is really
 hiding the true God from me?

in iv. 22. Our Lord said of the Samaritans, "*Ye
 worship ye know not what.*" There must be
 no such ignorance in us. We must take heed
 against setting up a God of our own fancy,
 as those did to whom God said, "*Thou
 thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself.*"
What God is, what He approves, what He

in i. 21.

will do, what He has done, can only be known from the Bible. It is *the God of the Bible* whom I am to *believe, fear, and love*.

2. Am I regarding any creature with that *confidence, fear, and love* which belong only to God? I read of some that *receive* honour one of another, instead of seeking the honour that cometh from God only. I read of some who *loved* the praise of men more than the praise of God: of some that *trust* in uncertain riches, not in the living God: of some that are *lovers* of pleasures more than lovers of God: of some whose God is their belly, and have no higher object than eating and drinking: of some who love father and mother and other dear friends more than Christ. Such persons are not keeping the first commandment. *That which we trust most, fear most, or love most, is our God.*

John v. 44.

John xii 43.

1 Tim. vi. 17.

2 Tim. iii. 4.

Phil. iii. 19.

Luke xiv. 26.

3. Am I living in the heartfelt *faith, fear, and love* of the true God, which His faithfulness, His supremacy, and His love to man demand? Do I believe in Him, fear Him, and love Him "with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength"?

Catechism

The SECOND Commandment warns us with

careful urgency against what might have seemed a very natural aid to religion.

What (we might think) could be more helpful than some symbol to remind us of God, to bring before us some nice thought of Him, or to help us to fix our thoughts when praying to Him? Thus some have looked up to the Sun and Moon and Stars as reminders, and as aids to religion. In a like spirit Aaron made the golden calf; and all use of *teraphim* (or household images) and other idols has originated in the same way. But God has in this command plainly forbidden such mistaken aids to religious feeling. And if the fifth commandment has pre-eminence as having a promise, this second command is distinguished by having a warning. We know how drunkenness and many other vices bring injury on children's children. Here we are taught that the use of idols works a like injury. And history tells how, on account of wilful disobedience to this command more than for any other sin, Israel suffered the seventy years' captivity.

True that the use of such aids is very *natural*, and seems likely to edify. But it is *impossible* that any thing so precisely

the old and awful sin of idolatry, and so utterly destitute of any Scripture sanction, can be safely employed. The use of images, intended at first to represent and symbolize some attribute of the true God, has everywhere led, sooner or later, to the worship of other gods. And it is a simple fact that wherever first the cross and then the crucifix have been introduced into Christian worship, saint-worship has soon crept in. If we wish to "worship" God as a Spirit, "in Spirit, in truth," if we wish to "give Him thanks" aright, especially in the "cup of blessing" or thanksgiving at the Holy Table, we must "keep far from the false matter" of idols, and remember the last words of St. John's first letter, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*" What we need to help us is not idols, but more of His help who alone can teach us to worship.

The difficulty of truly worshipping God is one which all people feel when they begin to try so to worship; and we are very apt to think that what we require is some outward help, something to attract or arouse us through the eye and the ear; and we sometimes say, that because we have bodies

John iv. 23.

1 Cor. x. 16.

1 John v. 21.

Rom. viii. 26.

nm. viii. 15
and 26.

as well as souls, this must be right. But God's rule is not that *we* have *bodies*, but that *He is a Spirit*. And we ought to remember that the difficulty is in our poor fallen hearts, and that nothing can cure us but *more grace*; and for this we must seek, and on this must depend. The second command should constantly remind us where our weakness lies, and with whom is our strength.

COLLECT.

O God, have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to believe in Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength: give me that grace by which alone I can truly worship Thee and give Thee heartfelt thanks; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

I DO.

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VI.

Faith and the Law of Liberty.



VI.

Faith and the Law of Liberty.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."—1 JOHN v. 3.

The perfect law of Liberty."—JAMES i. 25.

At coming to Confirmation you cannot know *all* that will be required of you. You are like the captain of a ship, who sails without the aid of his orders *sealed*, to be opened at a certain time or that place. But you have such Faith in your King, and such a loyal love to Him, that you readily accept His commission, even to what must as yet be unknown to you; for He will give "grace for every time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

But the *general outline* of His orders is in our hands, and it is your duty, at this time, especially to study these orders, because the Confirmation vow pledges you to make them your *standard of life*. I take up three more *these orders to-day*.

The THIRD Commandment is, first of all, a barrier *against all irreverence*, (1) in speech : (2) in worship.

(1) We all know that perjury (false swearing), profane swearing, and broken vows, are breaches of this holy law. But many people use such expressions as "God knows," "God bless me," "Thank God," "Good heavens," and the like, without the slightest meaning ; and some will speak of the devil (or the deuce) or even of the Place of the Lost, with a strange heedlessness, and even levity ; and some will try to spice their conversation by a laughable anecdote, or a witty allusion about the Bible ; and in all this they will try to justify themselves by saying that they *mean nothing*. But the sin of such things consists in this, that we ought *never* to tread on such holy ground, and to speak of these things, *without meaning* something.

(2) Another common breach of this command is irreverence in the worship of God, whether in His House, or in family prayer, or by ourselves, or when thanking *God at our table* for His daily bounties.

1. iii. 12.
iv. 16.

Faith comes with boldness to the Throne of

Grace, but never with irreverence. Faith *does* "fear this glorious and fearful Name, Deut. xxviii. 58. THE LORD THY GOD." You cannot approach the worship of God, or behave in it, or go forth from it, *too full of holy awe*. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly Ps. lxxxix. 7. of His saints, and to be had in reverence of them that are round about Him."

This command teaches us, secondly, that we are to "*honour* God's holy Name and His Word." We must not be ashamed of His Name, but must proclaim and praise it; and, remembering that we were baptized in this holy Name, we must seek "that the Name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified *in us*." Catechism. Acts v. 41. Isaiah xii. 4. 2 Thess. i. 12.

I come to the FOURTH great Law. Your life as Christians will depend very much on the use you make of God's *gift* of the Sabbath Day—the great help of those who would "serve Him truly all the days of their life." Ex. xvi. 29. Catechism.

The following hints may be useful.

1. Keep the Sabbath Day holy, because God commands you in the Fourth Law to do so. The Fourth Command says the *Seventh day* is to be the Sabbath; but the *Fourth Command* did not tell the Jews, and

Ex. xvi. 22,
23.

does not tell us, *from what day to count*. They were taught what day to keep *their* Sabbath by the giving of manna for a certain six days, and the withholding of the manna on the seventh. *We* are taught when to keep *our* Sabbath by the Resurrection of Jesus ("the Lord of the Sabbath Day"), and by the practice of the Apostles. The Fourth Commandment, which says nothing about *what* seventh day, binds us as much as it did the Jews.

See, for
Instance,
Matt. xii. 9
—13.
Luke xiii 10
—17.
John v. 1
—19.
John ix. 1—
16.

2. Keep the Sabbath Day because the Lord Jesus Christ showed on many occasions the true spirit in which it ought to be kept, wrought all His *unasked* miracles* upon it, taught us that it is for Man, not for Jews only, and suffered it to be called *His Day*. (Rev. i. 11.)

Is. lviii. 13.

3. Keep the Sabbath Day in remembrance of the Lord's Resurrection, and in prospect of His return. Keep it in love to Him, and keep it as a delight. Keep it as the Christian's day of liberty: liberty from care, liberty from toil, liberty from all lower pleasures—so that, without any distraction, *you may be with Jesus* whom your soul

* *i.e.*, Unasked miracles of *healing*.

loveth. Keep it, not so much because you must as because you may. Not as a slave, but as a son: because of a law of the God you love, and because of a law which is just and good, and which you love for its own sake. Keep it *all*, not only half of it.

4. Keep it for others. Give no needless trouble. Consider for others as well as for yourself. It is the duty of parents, masters, mistresses, and employers to secure to those dependent on them as much liberty as is compatible with the real liberty of all.

Observe the form of the Command Thou, *nor thy son, &c.*, and Deut. v 15.

We never grow up so as to get beyond the reach of the FIFTH Command. Subordination to a higher authority, in various steps one above another up to the very Throne of God, is the law of the universe. And in true human life it is God's appointment that Age, Experience, Knowledge, Wisdom, Holiness, Power, Authority, should *lead*. The more this is seen, owned, and acted upon by all, the nobler and the happier Human Society becomes. Without this, a nation becomes only like a chaos, or a mere troop of selfish wolves, or, as described in Scripture, a tumultuous sea.

Psalm xcii 3. 4.

But the first lessons in this great Law of

Order are in the *Home*. Parents have that advantage of age, experience, etc., which fits them to lead. And the more thoroughly children honour their parents, the more do they reflect honour on their own wisdom. Such conduct prepares and makes easy the way to every future duty, and opens the door to manifold enjoyments. While the neglect of this command is the first step to every sin, and the wide door by which manifold sorrows enter; respect to Age, Experience, Rank, Authority, in Church and State, is the noblest and surest sign of coming greatness. For only those are fitted to command who have first learned to obey.

COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant that I may love the things which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise, that so my heart may surely then be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ, my *Lord*. *Amen*.

I DO.

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VII.

Faith and the Royal Law.

VII.

Faith and the Royal Law.

“ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”—ROM. xiii. 10.

“ The royal law...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—JAMES ii. 8.

THE SIXTH Command speaks of a crime to which we might well imagine we should never be tempted. But none grow hard or morose enough for such a crime till they have yielded to that temper (whether hasty or sullen), to that malice, envy, or hatred, or to that unforgiving spirit, which, equally with murder, are forbidden by this law. And indeed this law commands us to set a lofty value on human life. Not only may none take human life, save the supreme Government in each state to which God has entrusted the solemn “power of the sword,” Rom: xiii. 4. but we should do all that in us lies to

preserve so great a gift till God recalls the Breath that He has given.

God's best earthly gift to man in Paradise was a wife to be an help meet for him. Christ adorned with His Presence and His first miracle the famous wedding at Cana: and He has dignified married life as the emblem of the love that is betwixt Him and His Church. The SEVENTH Command is the guardian of that Divine institution, and it is not too much to say that well-nigh half the miseries of this sinful world arise from open or secret disregard to it. But those who do so disregard it are warned

hes. iv. 4 that "God is the avenger of all such," and
-8.
b xiii. 4. that them in particular "God will judge."

So that every person, every word, every book, every place, and every scene, which would debase us from a pure ideal of God's Holy ordinance, and defile and stain our hearts, should be shunned or cast aside as one would shun or fling off a viper.

Any knowledge of human affairs teaches us how constantly it is needful to remember and to apply the EIGHTH Commandment.

Amongst the almost infinite number of

ways in which it is all too commonly forgotten, may be named such things as false weights and measures, adulteration, lying advertisements, lies behind the counter, lies in the market-place or the sale room, unfulfilled contracts, bad materials for good, work scamped if paid by the job, time wasted if paid by time, petty pilfering, tradesmen's tips to servants, and every kind of bribe, abuse of places of trust, conniving at wrong in others, unpaid debts, gambling, and the greed of employers who regard not what is justly due to those who labour for them. In the struggle for existence, and amid the rivalry and extravagances that abound, there is need of the most rigorous consideration, *among all classes*, as to whether we are exactly and thoroughly honourable, "true, and just, in all our dealings."

While the NINTH Command expressly forbids *slandering* (or bearing *false* witness) it likewise forbids *evil speaking*—malicious or idle reporting of what may be true—and all lying. At the same time it commands us to bear true witness, either against or in favour of a person, when properly called upon to do so. And it further enjoins the

cultivation of that charity that loves to cover the faults of others rather than display and make the most of them.

The Tenth Commandment teaches us that even the *desires* which rise up in rebellion against any of the previous commandments are in themselves of the nature of sin, and that not only our conduct but our hearts need to be brought into perfect unison with the will of God. In other words, we must "love the things which God commands." ll. 14th S. 1. Trin. In the application of the Second Table which our Lord makes to the young ruler, He leaves out the words "Thou shalt *not covet*," and in place of them inserts "Thou *shalt love* thy neighbour as thyself." 1. 19. xix. This is the brief but complete summary of the last six commands.

When we think of these laws, and how they touch every deed, and thought, and word of our life, we may well pause before we say, "I Do" mean to keep them. Good resolutions and fair promises are too often based on ignorance of the breadth of God's command: ignorance of our own depravity and weakness: and ignorance of Satan's craft. And just in this manner Israel

covenanted with God, in a solemn form indeed, but with a most shallow purpose, to "do all the words which the Lord had said." Exod. xxiv.
3-8.

It is to be feared that many who come to Confirmation are only re-enacting the old covenant, and saying either heedlessly, or with self-confidence, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient."

Our Confirmation promise, however, is not the blind and self-confident promise of keeping the commands with a view to Life, but an acceptance of God's promises of remission and of sanctification to them that are in Christ Jesus.

The words "I DO" in the Confirmation Service, if they referred *solely* to the purpose of keeping the commands, would mean that we are trying again the old and oft-tried way to Life which never yet brought one soul there.

But those words, taken as they stand really, express the purpose of obedience *on the basis of the Creed*. "I do" believe in the remission of my past disobediences through the precious "Blood of the New Testament" (or covenant), and I do believe that the

VIII.

Faith at the King's Feet.

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee : turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein : for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”—JOSHUA I. 7, 8.

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.”—LUKE x. 39.

THUS far, during the preceding chapters, we have been trying to look at (1) the great Object of our Faith, even the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have access by the Holy Spirit unto the Father : (2) the great and paramount importance of our having

Faith: (3) the victory of Faith over all evil: (4) the necessary fruit of true Faith, even a sincere spirit of obedience to God's holy Law.

But in order to nourish and ripen *faith*, we must be continually growing in our knowledge of God, of His Wisdom, Power, Faithfulness, Love, etc., and of His great Works and Purposes. And likewise in order to more complete *obedience*, we need fuller instructions and continual reminders as to our duty. Both these are furnished to us in the Bible, which supplies us with the rule of *Faith* and of *Practice*; for the Bible is simply a vast and varied expansion or enlargement, first of the Creed, and secondly of the Ten Commandments.

Confirmation
Service.
Last Collect
but one.

Joshua i. 8.

As, therefore, before Confirmation, it is our duty to know as much of that Creed and of those Commandments as possible, so, after our Confirmation, it is our duty to go forward and grow upward "in the knowledge and obedience of God's word," for "then we shall make our way prosperous, and then shall we have good success." That God may lead you on in this knowledge and obedience will be one of the great

prayers of the Confirmation Service; and before passing on to three other subjects still remaining, I desire now to impress upon mind and conscience the great privilege and duty of constant searching the Scriptures.

For upwards of 2,500 years of human history men were, as far as we know, without a Bible. The first person who can be said to have possessed a Bible was Joshua. It was a *little* Bible then. It had only five books. But it was complete as far as it went, just as the little blade that comes out of the ground is complete. Afterwards it grew, somewhat as a plant grows, rooted in the past, sending up its branches into the future. "Holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost," added a history, or a biography, or a proverb, or a prophecy, or a prayer, or a lofty song. By far the chief part of these additions were made between about B.C. 1050 and B.C. 400. Then at length, after the Ascension, there were added, within about 50 years, the great four-fold Gospel, the Record of some Acts of the two leading Apostles, twenty-one letters of Apostles or Apostolic men, and the great

² Peter i. 21.

book with which the volume closes, called "the Revelation."

This Bible the Christian is bound, to the best of his ability, to study. It was "given by inspiration of God," and it is designed and adapted to be "profitable" for various uses.

See what was said to *Joshua* about studying it. He was entering on new and untried duties and dangers. He was commanded, three times over, to be *of good courage*: he was promised that God should be *with him*; but he was bidden to "meditate" in the inspired Word "day and night," as his rule and guide in all he undertook.

Psalm i. 2, 3. See how David took this up. "Blessed is the man whose meditation is the law of God day and night."

John v. 39. See what our Lord said. "Search the Scriptures."

Acts xvii. 11. See what St. Luke says. "These were noble . . . in that they searched the Scriptures daily."

2 Tim. iii. 15. See what St. Paul says. "The Holy Scriptures . . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

A few words as to the manner of reading.

(1) Read daily if but little. Psalm i. 2.

(2) As a rule, read *consecutively*, going on from beginning to end. Hebrews i. 1.

(3) Read intelligently, trying to get an *idea* of the whole, and of the parts. Acts viii. 30.
Sometimes read several chapters, then go back and read a little, more carefully. Sometimes read with references.

(4) Read devotionally, with meditation as well as prayer.

(5) Read practically. Live by what you read. Ask yourself, What have I learnt about myself? What I am? What I ought to be? What have I learnt about God the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit? About this world? About the Kingdom of God, and the world to come? James i.
22, 23.

(6) Especially look for Christ in the Word, and seek the Spirit's aid in reading the Word. John v.
39, 46.
Luke xxiv.
45.

The Bible is the book by which all other books, magazines, papers, and, indeed, all words of man should be measured, weighed, and judged. We ought, therefore, to have it ready for use in our mind. The well-known

IX.

Faith at the King's Throne.

"After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."—MATT. vi. 9—13.

And read HEB. iv. 14—16.

I SAID in my first address that the Church does not wish to multiply "Tares" among the "Wheat" by merely persuading people to be confirmed; and in accordance with this view I have been trying to set before you what Christian life really is, both in its roots and its fruits.

If you have in the least degree understood

and felt what has been said as to the threefold holy purpose, Renunciation, Faith, and Obedience, you cannot but realize that you "are not able to do these things of yourself, . . . and to serve God, without His special grace:" *i.e.*, without His grace supplied on each occasion and for each need; and for this you must call "at all times—by diligent prayer."

The Lord's Prayer is the Model of Prayer, and I wish to point out some of the *chief* things in which we ought to copy it in our own prayers.

(1) In its spirit of *desire*. All real prayer is an expression of earnest wish and desire.

Catechism "I *desire* my Lord God," etc.

(2) In its spirit of *confidence*. We are to speak to God as our "Father." "The Giver of all goodness" to all them that are in Christ. So that in all prayer we should be able to say, "This I *trust* He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Catechism

(3) In its spirit of *Reverence*. "Our Father which art *in Heaven*." "God is in *Heaven* and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few:" *i.e.*, real.

scilicet. v. a.

(4) In its *supreme regard for God Himself*. His Name, His Kingdom, His Will are the matters of primary importance. All other matters must be subordinate to these. Every other wish and prayer must rank behind, and give place to, the desire that God's Name may be glorified, His Kingdom advanced, and His Will done.

(5) In the *proportion of things* spiritual. Only one petition out of seven is for temporal things, and that one of a very moderate character.

(6) In its spirit of *penitence, watchfulness, and large expectation*, seeking forgiveness, praying against temptation, and for deliverance from evil.

(7) In the spirit of love, that prays for others as well as ourselves. "*Our Father, us.*"

The six great petitions in the Lord's Prayer (*i.e.*, all but the petition for daily bread) may be really summed up in this one—prayer for the Holy Spirit. For all the things that are sought in these petitions can only be wrought in and for us and the whole Church by the Holy Ghost. This is clear as to the first three petitions. And it is by Him

alone that that word of pardon through the blood of Jesus can be spoken to the soul, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee:" by Him alone we can be kept from temptation, "saved and defended in all dangers, ghostly and bodily," or delivered from evil, kept "from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death."

Our Lord Himself seems to refer to this as the great underlying subject-matter of all prayer, when, instead of saying that God would bestow all the things mentioned in the prayer He had just been teaching, He concludes, "Your Heavenly Father will *give the Holy Spirit* to them that ask Him."

For this great and manifold gift, then, let us pray continually.

It is a great help to pray out loud, or, if you cannot be alone, at least to let your lips move in the words of prayer. As you kneel down, pause for a moment to think (1) *to whom* you are going to speak,—the infinite and eternal and glorious God ; (2) *what right and claim you have* for so great and honourable a privilege : viz., that you come in the name of Jesus, and

therefore may boldly come to the throne of grace; (3) *by what power* you can pray as you should,—by the help of the Holy Ghost. Then confess your sins, especially any that have troubled you lately; ask for pardon, thank God for pardon; ask for help and grace for the future. Do not omit to pray for others,—your relatives, your teachers, your country, the heathen at home and abroad. Often praise God. Enlarge, in your prayers. Don't grudge a little time. Plead with God. Knock again and again. Expect an answer. Look out for an answer. See how bold Abraham was, yet how reverent. He got all he asked for; and, if you look at Genesis xix. 29, you will see that he got even more than he asked for. And God will hear all that really pray. It is a good thing to turn sermons and other good words into prayer as you read them, and often, as each day passes on, to shoot up a brief prayer-thought to heaven.

Gen. xviii
23 to end.

I have already spoken (p. 40, etc.) of the difficulty of keeping the thoughts from wandering in prayer. It is only by *the aid of the Holy Spirit this* can be in any measure overcome. Nothing in the Christian life is of

more importance. Success here is success everywhere. But do not be discouraged at defeat. Never give in. In private or before others, ever aim earnestly at *reality in practice*.

Without prayer you cannot live a Christian life. God commands us to pray. "A
Matt vii. "seek," "knock." He promises to hear
"Ye *shall* receive;" "ye *shall* find;" "it *shall*
be opened unto you."

COLLECT.

Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, hear
for I am poor and needy: Be merciful to
me, O Lord; for I cry unto Thee daily.
Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer,
and attend to the voice of my supplications.
Amen.

I DO.

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X.

Faith at the King's Table.

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X.

Faith at the King's Table.

I COR. xi. 23—28.

CONFIRMATION admits you to sit down with "the blessed company of all faithful people" at the Table of the Lord. If you are really meaning what you say in the Confirmation Vow, and are steadfastly purposed to walk in the spirit of faith, repentance, and obedience, then you are invited to come and you ought to come, to the Lord's Supper. If one had to choose between two evils, it were better not to have been confirmed than after Confirmation to relapse into a neglect of the Lord's Table.

This holy Feast is in one sense the chief means of grace: viz., because, while all are invited to prayer, and to read and hear the



Word; only penitent, believing, and loving Christians are invited to the Lord's Supper.

See 12th
Answer on
the Sacra-
ments in the
Catechism.

I. The primary object of the Lord's Supper is stated in the Catechism to be "for the continual remembrance of [two things, first] the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and [secondly] of the benefits which we receive thereby." It is designed that we may our-

8th Answer

selves have in remembrance, and "show forth" (*i.e.*, hand down, or hand on to others, the remembrance of) the One Sacrifice once offered by Christ on Mount Calvary. It is not itself a sacrifice. The Lord's Table is not in any sense an altar, and there is no offering of Christ in the Lord's Supper: but those who RECEIVE the bread and wine are to "do THIS" in remembrance (1) of the One Sacrifice of the Cross, and (2) of the innumerable "benefits which we receive thereby." Hence we pray that "we, *receiving* these creatures of Bread and Wine *in remembrance* of His Death and Passion, may be

Communion
Office — the
"Prayer of
Consecra-
tion."

partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood;" and hence too it is said, "Take and eat this [bread] *in remembrance* that Christ died for thee," etc. The Lord's Supper is thus "a perpetual memory [reminding us,

Communion
Office.

not God] of that His precious death, until His coming again." Communion Office..

It is important to understand that there is no sacrifice or offering in the Lord's Supper, except the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" in the hearts and on the lips of the assembled guests, and the renewed offering and presenting of ourselves, our souls and bodies, as a living sacrifice to God. It is because of this thanksgiving, in lip and life, that St. Paul calls the cup "the cup of blessing" or thanksgiving, and that the whole service is sometimes called "the Eucharist" or the Service of Thanks. 1 Cor. x. 16.

II. The proper effect of this reception of the Lord's Supper may be called its secondary object: viz., "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are [strengthened] by the bread and wine." For the Lord's Supper is not only a badge or token of our profession as Christians, "but rather a certain sure witness, and effectual sign of grace, and God's goodwill toward us, by the which He doth work invisibly* in us, and doth not 11th Answer

* "Invisibly" means spiritually, in our souls, just as, in the Catechism, "visible" is the opposite of "spiritual."

Article xxv. only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him."

And it is "not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, but rather is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death;" so that "the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of

Art. xxviii. Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ."

It cannot, therefore, be a matter of indifference whether we come to the Lord's Table or not. To neglect it is to neglect the only means of grace which is specially appointed for believers only.

III. But as the Lord's Supper is only intended for penitent, believing, and loving Christians, so it only imparts a blessing "to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same." That great necessity of *faith*, about which I have said so much, is here absolutely necessary. For "the wicked,"
Art. xxviii. and "even such as be void of a lively [living] faith . . . in no wise partake of Christ."
Art. xxix. "The Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the *faithful* [and only by the faithful] in the Lord's

Supper, and, therefore, it is required of them that they have "a lively [living] faith in God's mercy through Christ, and a thankful remembrance of His death."

Catechism
Answer 10 on
the Sacra-
ments.

Catechism.
Answer 12.

The Bread and Wine which "strengthen and refresh the body" are given by *the Minister*, and should be *taken and eaten* in the spirit of reverential thoughtfulness; but the Body and Blood of Christ are not given by the Minister at all, but they "are given [by Christ], taken, and eaten, in the Supper [by the faithful] only after an heavenly and spiritual manner: [not in the hand or in the mouth]. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith." Hence it is said, "Draw near with Faith;" and, again, "Feed upon Him in thy heart by Faith with thanksgiving."

Art. xxviii.

Communion
Office.

Communion
Office.

Thus it cannot but be that the elements of Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper should be "holy mysteries," because their real meaning and spirit is "hidden from the wise and prudent [in their own eyes], but is revealed unto babes." Unto you that *believe* "it is given to *know* the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Feeding on Christ is as simple an act of the living soul as feeding

Communion
Office.

Matt. xi. 25

Matt. xiii. 11

on bread is a simple act of the body. Christ has made the one act to be a means for enabling us the better to perform the other. Do not confound the two together. *That* is the error of Romanism and half-Romanism. Do not think you can do without Christ's appointed means of feeding on Him. *That* is to make yourself wiser than the Master, who in His love said, "*Do this in remembrance of Me.*"

COLLECT.

I do not presume to come to Thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in my own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. I am not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table. But Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant me, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that my sinful body may be made clean by His body, and my soul washed through His most precious blood, and that I may evermore dwell in Him, and He in me." Amen.

I DO.

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XI.

**Faith Looking on the Past with
Thanksgiving.**

XI.

Faith Looking on the Past with Thanksgiving.

“ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized
into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ? ’
—ROM. vi. 3.

WE cannot understand Confirmation aright
without looking back to our baptism ; and a
more suitable topic for Easter Day * could
scarcely be found. For the Catechism gives
this truly Scriptural account of baptism, that
it is on our part “ a means,” and on God’s
part “ a pledge,” of “ a death unto sin, and a
new birth unto righteousness.”

Catechism
and Ans. on
Sacraments.
5th Ans. on
Sacraments.

In this death unto sin and new birth unto
righteousness there are four things, closely
bound up with the tidings of Easter Day,
which I wish you clearly to understand.

I. *Forgiveness.* Our death unto sin is

• This address was given on Easter Day. (See Prefatory note.)

wrapped up in Christ's death for us, and follows from our true union with Him. He died unto sin once for all, and only in one possible sense: viz., in discharging by His death the penalty due to sin. We became dead to the law, discharged from the penalty of the law broken, by His death. It is into His death that we were baptized. We had thus the seal of forgiveness. The first and leading idea of Baptism has thus always been the remission of sins.

Rom. vi. 10,
11.

2. *Mortifying of sin*:—the duty of that daily mortifying (*dealing out of death to*) all our evil and corrupt affections, which is a part of our profession, and which follows strictly on that *death unto sin*, that discharge from sin's penalty through Christ's death, which we derive from Him.

Col. iii. 4.

3. *Justification*. "Christ was raised again for our justification:" raised again, not only that He might be shown to be the *just one*, but that His justness or righteousness might be imputed to all them that believe. And justification, be it remembered, is much more than pardon. It is being regarded as a just or righteous person against whom no sin is chargeable.

Rom. iv. 25

4. *Power.* "The working of God's Eph. i. 19, 20 mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead," is represented as the measure of "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe;" and this, as in all other things, so, especially, in our gradual sanctification, in the raising us "from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness."

Of this fourfold grace,—the grace of pardon, the grace of mortifying sin, the grace of present and complete justification, the grace of gradual, but finally perfected, sanctification, the Name given us in our baptism should remind us, telling us of the old self put off, and of Christ put on. For your baptism, if it be indeed *completed* and rendered valid by subsequent "*repentance* whereby you forsake sin, and *faith* whereby you steadfastly believe the promises of God made [*i.e.*, visibly signed and sealed] to you in that Sacrament," may well be regarded as the first memorable mercy of your life, by which, "as by an instrument, you were grafted into the Church," and wherein "the promises of forgiveness and of your adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost

6th Ans. on
Sacraments

Art. xxvii. were visibly signed and sealed." It is in this sense, as having duly received the visible sign and seal of the promises of forgiveness and adoption, that any one is "made a member of Christ," etc., or "a child of grace," in baptism. And the words "rightly receive," in Article xxvii., together with the requisition of repentance and faith, in the 6th and 7th answers on the Sacraments, show that even in this sense the words, "Wherein I was made a member of Christ," etc., are only properly applicable to such as now repent and believe. But those who do so repent and believe, both may and should acknowledge the goodness of God in the divinely-appointed initiatory Sacrament of our Redemption.

Catechism
2nd Answer.
5th Ans. on
Sacraments.

Those who brought you to baptism, if they at all realized what they were doing, prayed earnestly for you that you might have the inward grace of baptism, and if their hearts rose up to the level of the service, they asked this with a humble *confidence* that God heard them. For the Thanksgiving in the Baptismal Service is not, as some erroneously imagine, as good as a statement that every child baptized is truly born again; but it is a

devotional expression of *thankful assurance*, put in the mouths of sincere worshippers. They have prayed for a particular child, and they now express their *confidence* that God heareth them, and that, therefore, they *have* the petition which they asked of Him.

1 John v. 15

It is for you now to take up their thanksgiving. They, alas ! may have greatly failed, both in their prayer for you and their duty to you. And you yourself may have been utterly unmindful of the promises sealed to you, or made for you, in your baptism. But if this be so, you have the more reason to bless God that He has gone so far beyond the prayers or efforts of others for you, and has so mercifully passed by your own transgressions, as to have led you now to repentance and faith in His dear Son. It will but serve to deepen that repentance and to strengthen that faith, if you reflect how long ago the exceeding great and precious promises of a "death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," and of union with Christ so as to be children and heirs of God, "were made to you" in your baptism. Now at length those words of the Catechism (dead and unmeaning as long and as far as you

5th Ans. on
Sacraments.

6th Ans. on
Sacraments.

4th Ans in
Catechism.

lived without repentance and faith) are fitted to your lips and are the true utterance of your heart—"I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that it hath pleased Him to call me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." This spirit of heartfelt thanks, and of humble prayer, is the best preparation for Confirmation.

In this spirit you may, very humbly but very thankfully, use the following

COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate me by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto me the forgiveness of all my sins; strengthen me, I beseech Thee, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in me Thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill me, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.

I DO.



XII.

**Faith Looking Forward with
Boldness.**

XII.

Faith Looking Forward with Boldness.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."—ST. MATT. xxviii. 18, 20.

MY efforts to aid you in preparing for Confirmation draw to a close. I will sum up briefly the chief things of which I have spoken. Christ is offered to you in all the fulness of His grace. In Him the love and care of the Heavenly Father, the comfort and might of the Holy Ghost, forgiveness of the soul's rebellion, healing of the soul's sickness, eternal glory, are set before you.

I have shown you that the main matter to which you are called is to receive Christ, to believe heartily and truly in the Son of God.

I have shown you that those who do so

believe in Christ, will certainly break off with evil, and will cleave to God's commands.

I have shown you that those who will follow Christ must study His Word, must be diligent in prayer, and must make a spiritual use of the Lord's Table, as appointed means for strengthening and refreshing the soul's life.

The question to be asked you very shortly is, whether you do accept Christ as offered to you in the Gospel; whether you take Him as your Saviour from guilt, power, and consequence of sin; whether you take Him as your *Captain*, under whose Name you will fight against all evil, and your *Master*, whom you will, by His grace given to you, faithfully serve?

The *mercies* of the Gospel were sealed to you in your baptism; do you now thankfully take up and claim them? The *requirements* of the Gospel were, in your baptism, promised on your behalf; do you with sincerity and heartiness acknowledge and stand to them?

Aye or No? Yea or Nay? Eternity depends on the answer!

Only remember two things: first, that the

heart must speak with the yea, or it is no yea at all: and, secondly, *not* to say "Yea"—to put off, to shuffle out of the decision—is, for the present, to say "Nay." Wisdom, the Word, Angels, Saints, Heaven, aye, Hell—all cry *Choose* Christ.

To those who are so choosing, I wish now to offer three parting words of help and encouragement, about grace for the journey, and about the glory to be revealed at the journey's end.

I. First, through the whole journey remember that *Christ is with God for you*. He "ever liveth to make intercession for them." He sitteth at God's right hand, and "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sin." There is a glorious company of saints who are with Jesus, and among them some who knew and loved us. But not a word is told us of their being able or appointed to help us, or plead our cause at the throne of God. Jesus has taken this entire burden on Himself. In the Tabernacle, the High Priest bore on his heart and on his shoulders the names of the twelve tribes. It is but a

Heb. vii. 25.

1 John ii. 2.

Exo. xxviii.
12, 29.



John xvii. 24 behold His glory," and triumph therein for ever. He is gone to prepare a place for you : and He is coming again, and will receive you unto Himself ; that where He is, there you may be also. Only believe in Him. Abide in Him. And let His words abide in you.

COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both my heart and body, in the ways of Thy laws, and in the works of Thy commandments ; that, through Thy most mighty protection both here and ever, I may be governed and preserved in body and soul ; through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I DO.

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